

Research Methods

Assessment Tasks

The assessment for Research Methods is composed of three assessment tasks which are due by the dates listed below.

Task	Task name	Due date(s)	Weighting
1	Blogging	27 Feb – 9 Apr, 2009	20%
2	Collaborative research project	29 May, 2009	20%
3	Individual research project	20 Sep, 2009	60%

You will be given written feedback on completion of each of the written assignments.

If you are unsuccessful the resit policy will be applied.

Resources

Class notes & readings
Bill Robertson Library
Textbooks
Internet

Research Methods

Describe the research process

Locate literature relevant to this query

Understand and critique research articles relevant to health practice

Blogging

To complete this assessment task you must make a blog post on the topics listed below by the dates listed.

Subject	First due	Final due
The research process	6 Mar, 2009	13 Mar, 2009
Information quality	13 Mar, 2009	27 Mar, 2009
Your search process	27 Mar, 2009	3 Apr, 2009
Evaluation of research findings	9 Apr, 2009	1 May, 2009

Making the posts

When you make your post on each of the topics, the subject of the post must match the subject in the table above.

The required content of each post is outlined below. It is expected that you will demonstrate understanding of the course material covered including the application of effective research strategies.

The research process

Describe the research process based on the definition provided by your lecturer.

Information quality

Describe how information from different sources may vary in quality, and how to differentiate good quality information from poor quality.

Your search process

Your lecturer will give you a search task.

You must describe your search process including the creation of your search query, databases accessed, and sources found, and information quality.

Evaluation of research findings

Your lecturer will provide you with one or more research articles, and you will be asked to evaluate the quality of the research findings as directed by your lecturer.

Grading of the posts

Your posts will be graded in reference to the blogging rubric found at http://docs.google.com/Doc?id=dg6fsk9v_60g4rkd6tj

On the first due date your blog post will be assessed for comprehension of key ideas. To meet competency, your post must be graded at a minimum of 2 on the blog rubric *understanding* scale. You will be given feedback at this stage as to whether your post will meet the competency criteria or not.

You will have a week following this grading to view the posts of other students, and consider how your post could be improved. You are able to rework your blog post over this time.

At the final due date your post will be assessed using the complete blog rubric.

Research Methods

Locate literature relevant to this query

Understand and critique research articles relevant to health practice

Present research evidence effectively

Collaborative research project

In this assessment task you will collaborate with the rest of your class in a literature review on a topic of the lecturer's choosing.

This is intended to be a learning experience which will prepare you for your individual research project.

To be marked as competent, you will need to contribute a minimum of two articles from peer-reviewed journals which are relevant to the subject matter of the research project. The articles must be original (i.e. not already contributed by another student), and must be correctly referenced according to APA style in both the body and the reference list.

Marks towards a merit will be given for the quality of the contribution, analysis and interpretation of research findings, discussion with the class about the project, and work on formatting the literature review.

Research Methods

Develop a research query

Locate literature relevant to this query

Understand and critique research articles relevant to health practice

Present research evidence effectively

Describe the role of evidence-based practice

Individual Literature Review

In this assessment task you are required to

- Develop a research query
- Locate literature relevant to this query
- Interpret research findings
- Write up the literature review using good academic style

Develop a research query

You will be required to come up with a research query related to an aspect of massage practice that you want to find out about.

You must submit your research query to your lecturer for approval before you can continue with your literature review process.

Locate literature relevant to this query

Once you have your research query, you will need to search for relevant literature related to this query. It is advisable to search through as many databases as you have access to, using a comprehensive search strategy. Your review must include a minimum of three peer-reviewed journal articles which are relevant to your research query. It is expected that you will refer to textbooks as well as research articles. Textbooks often contain useful models which we can apply research findings to.

During your search process do not look for evidence to support your preconceptions, rather keep an open mind and see what the bulk of research evidence tells you.

When gathering articles and information remember to record the reference details of each source of information.

Often there may not be literature which specifically covers what you are interested in. Massage therapy research is a relatively new phenomenon after all. In this case it is advisable to look further afield. For example if you were interested in finding out how massage affected multiple sclerosis, you may not be able to find any research assessing the efficacy of massage for MS sufferers. You might look into what causes MS and find out that it is an autoimmune condition that attacks the central nervous system leading to demyelination. From this point you might research the effects of massage on autoimmune conditions and/or glial cells (cells which form myelination). You might also find out that MS is associated with fatigue and depression, then research the effects of massage on these symptoms.

Interpret research findings

Once you have collected your pool of literature you should have a look at what it is telling you and try to draw inferences.

Is there a clear message emerging from the research evidence?

Are there conflicting messages emerging from the research evidence? If so why?

Often when research evidence seems to contradict other evidence the reasons for this may become clear when you look a little deeper. Are there significant differences in methodology between the two pieces of research? Are there differences in population? In the method of massage application?

What are the implications of these research findings to massage practice?

Are the findings conclusive, or is more research needed?

Write up the literature review in good academic style

The literature review should be created in a Google document. Once it has been created it should be shared with your lecturer.

The final literature review should contain 1000 - 2000 words not including the referencing section.

It should contain an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The introduction should introduce the research query and the reasons why this query has been chosen as well as the main topics within the literature review.

The body should contain discussion of the literature relevant to the research query, and should be arranged into topics. The body can merely discuss research findings, but may also discuss how the methodologies or other characteristics of the research articles involved relate to these findings.

The conclusion should bring together the arguments laid out in the body of your literature review. It should state the relevance of this conclusion to massage practice, and also if more research is needed in any area.

The literature review should be referenced in good APA style. Please take care to state research findings in line with how they are stated in the original article. Do not exaggerate or enhance research findings to suit your literature review. If a researcher says “there is some evidence to support...” you should recognise that this is very specific language.

You must hand-in copies of the original peer-reviewed articles with your assessment. You may email them to your lecturer if they are in an electronic form. If they are openly available on the internet, then providing a link in either an email, or the original Google document will suffice.